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John Fogarty

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REMINDERS OF YOUR INSPIRING PRESENCE

P. JOHN FOGARTY

Superior Geral da Congregação do Espírito Santo - Roma

For four short, wonderful years we have been privileged to work with you on the General Council at the service of the worldwide Spiritan Congregation. Here in Rome there are still daily reminders of your inspiring presence among us and the legacy you have left behind:

- The vacant office, which stills bears your name, reminds us of the many hours of dedicated service you gave to the circumscriptions for which you were correspondent, of your untiring efforts to promote the 8-year Congregational animation plan and of the inspirational novenas for which you were personally responsible. The images of Pope Francis and of his two predecessors on the entrance door bear silent testimony to your deep commitment to the Church to which you gave your life.

- The empty seat at the General Council table is a constant reminder of your forceful interventions in favour of issues of justice and peace, shaped and coloured by your experience among your beloved Zulu people of South Africa, and of the many times you challenged us as a Council to be faithful in our decisions and in our lifestyle to the charism we have inherited from our Founders.

- The chair in the community oratory where you so frequently sat recalls the inspiration which you brought to our liturgy, your strong singing voice and your calls to authentic living of the Gospel.

- The small reconstructed attic in the grounds, which was the residence of Fr. Libermann while in Rome, revives spontaneous memories of the many hours of silent prayer you spent there and of your tireless efforts to promote the spirituality of our Founders and their canonization.

- The garden itself stand as a permanent reminder of your love for the beauty of creation and of the lengthy times you spent at work there; the plants you left behind will give testimony of your incredible zest for life for many years to come.

Most of all the memories which remain in our hearts of your enormous generosity, your infectious joy and your deep faith will inspire us always to be more authentic in our living of the Gospel and of our Spiritan charism.